

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 275453
ORIGIN SS-15

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /016 R

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APPROVED BY:S/S-O:LFLEISCHER

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TO USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 275453

EXDIS MILITARY HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

FOLLOWING REPEAT TEL AVIV 9290 SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO
AMMAN BEIRUT CAIRO DAMASCUS JIDDA KUWAIT LONDON USUN NEW YORK
JERUSALEM NOV 15.
QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 9290

EXDIS

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: EG, IS, XF

SUBJ: BEGIN-SADAT DIALOGUE AND ITS IMPACT ON ISRAEL

REF: TEL AVIV 9166

SUMMARY: THE BEGIN-SADAT "DIALOGUE" DEVELOPED AT A TIME
WHEN ISRAELIS WERE BECOMING INCREASINGLY CONCERNED ABOUT
THE DELAYS IN ARAB RESPONSES TO THE U.S.-ISRAELI WORKING
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2. BY WAY OF CONTRAST, BEGIN MOVED QUICKLY TO COUNTER SADAT'S DRAMATIC SPEECH OF NOV. 9 OFFERING TO COME TO JERUSALEM IN SEARCH OF PEACE. IN A NOON RADIO INTERVIEW ON NOV. 10; IN HIS BRIEFING FOR CODEL PRICE THAT AFTERNOON; AND IN HIS CLIMACTAC NOV. 11 STATEMENT AND NOV. 12 INVITATION, HE WELCOMED SADAT AND REPEATED HIS OWN EARLIER READINESS TO GO TO CAIRO. HE WAS CLEARLY TRYING TO REGAIN THE PEACE INITIATIVE. AT THE SAME TIME, HE REJECTED SADAT'S SUBSTANTIVE GOALS AND REAFFIRMED HIS OWN AS FIRMLY AS EVER; AND HE NAILED HIS FLAG MORE SOLIDLY THAN EVER TO THE WORKING PAPER AS AN "ISRAELI-U.S. BILATERAL AGREEMENT," SAYING IT WAS "INCONCEIVABLE" THAT ISRAEL WOULD AGREE TO ANY SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES.

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3. AS THE SMOKE FROM LAST WEEK'S VERBAL BARRAGES CLEARS AWAY, IT WOULD BE EASY TO DISMISS THESE EVENTS AS JUST A SERIES OF PUBLIC RELATIONS MANEUVERS. THEY LOOK INCREASINGLY LIKE MORE THAN THAT, EVEN IF SADAT WAS TALKING PRIMARILY TO THE OTHER ARABS AND BEGIN, THOUGH ADDRESSING HIMSELF TO THE EGYPTIAN PEOPLE, WAS AIMING ALSO AT ISRAELI AND AMERICAN AUDIENCES.

4. THE BEGIN RESPONSE TO SADAT'S INITIAL STATEMENT WAS READILY UNDERSTANDABLE. THE BIG QUESTIONS HERE IN RECENT DAYS WERE WHAT HAS BEEN GOING ON IN THE PROTRACTED ARAB-AMERICAN EXCHANGES ON HOW TO GET TO GENEVA; AND WHAT IS THE PRESENT OUTLOOK FOR THE U.S.-ISRAELI WORKING PAPER (WHICH IN CONTRAST TO ITS ORIGINAL RECEPTION, LOOKS BETTER HERE THE MORE THE ARABS REJECT IT). A MAJOR ISRAELI GOAL REMAINS TO REACH A SEPARATE AGREEMENT WITH EGYPT IF NOTHING MORE IS POSSIBLE. ANYTHING THAT WOULD GIVE THE ARABS ANOTHER PROCEDURAL OPTION THAN THE WORKING PAPER, OR THREATEN ISRAEL WITH MULTILATERAL RATHER THAN BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE ARABS WILL BE TENACIOUSLY RESISTED. A WELL-CONNECTED COMMENTATOR RECENTLY QUOTED DAYAN AS SAYING "THE MOMENT THEY START FINDING OUT WHETHER SADAT'S WORKING GROUP IDEA IS REAL...THE WORKING PAPER IS DEAD." THE ISRAELIS KNOW THE WORKING PAPER IS IN TROUBLE; UNTIL THEY LEARN MORE FROM THE

U.S. ABOUT NEXT STEPS, THEY WILL BLOCK ANY OPEN MOVE AWAY FROM IT.

5. THUS FAR, ISRAELI REACTIONS TO VARIOUS PUBLIC HINTS OF CHANGE IN PROCEDURES FOR GETTING TO GENEVA HAVE BEEN UNCHARACTERISTICALLY MILD. THEY HAVE STUDIOUSLY IGNORED REPORTS COMING OUT OF CAIRO OF A NEW "ARAB-AMERICAN" FORMULA BASED ON 1973 PROCEDURES. BEGIN'S ONLY COMMENT, AFTER MY LAST MEETING WITH HIM, WAS THAT IF THERE WERE NEW PROPOSALS, "I CANNOT IMAGINE THAT THE AMBASSADOR WOULD NOT HAVE SAID A SINGLE WORD TO US ABOUT SUCH A SERIOUS DEVELOPMENT." THERE HAS BEEN NO OFFICIAL REACTION TO MY LAST CONVERSATION WITH DAYAN ON GENEVA PROBLEMS (TEL AVIV 9154) OR DINITZ'S REPORT ON HIS NOV. 10 CONVERSATION WITH HABIB, ALTHOUGH DAYAN AND BEGIN MUST CERTAINLY SENSE WHAT THESE MAY PORTEND. HOWEVER, WE SHOULD EXPECT THEIR REACTION TO ANY
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EFFORT TO GIVE THE ARABS AN ESCAPE HATCH FROM THE TERMS OF THE WORKING PAPER, OR TO ANY U.S. PROPOSAL FOR A NEW PROCEDURAL APPROACH, TO BE ONE OF SURPRISE, "SHOCK," AND AT LEAST INITIALLY, FIRM INSISTENCE ON ADHERENCE TO THE "ISRAELI-AMERICAN BILATERAL AGREEMENT."

6. SADAT'S "GOING TO JERUSALEM" SPEECH COMPLICATED MATTERS FURTHER FOR THE ISRAELIS, PARTICULARLY COMING ON THE SAME DAY AS THE IDF BOMBING OF SOUTHERN LEBANON. THE ISRAELIS CERTAINLY DID NOT INTEND AND WERE UPSET ABOUT THE HEAVY CIVILIAN CASUALTIES. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, BEGIN SEIZED ON THE OPPORTUNITY PROVIDED BY SADAT'S DRAMATIC OFFER, IN ORDER TO REAFFIRM ISRAEL'S DESIRE FOR PEACE AND AN END TO BLOOD.

7. THE SADAT SPEECH, COMING AFTER A WEEK OF DIVIDED OPINION IN ISRAEL ABOUT THE PREVIOUS SADAT STATEMENT AND BRZEZINSKI'S VIEWS ON A POSSIBLE WEST BANK SETTLEMENT, HAS MADE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT HERE, EVEN ON THE MOST SKEPTICAL. THERE REMAINS DEEP DISTRUST OF THE OTHER SIDES' REAL INTENTIONS, AS MUCH IN ISRAEL AS AMONG THE ARABS. NEARLY ALL ISRAELIS, DOVES AS WELL AS HAWKS, PROFOUNDLY DOUBT ANY OF THEIR ARAB NEIGHBORS HAVE GIVEN UP THEIR ULTIMATE DETERMINATION TO DISMANTLE THE JEWISH STATE. YET, AS HAARETZ SAYS, SOME "FEEL THAT SADAT HAS BROKEN A TABOO, AND THAT THIS HAS GREAT SIGNIFICANCE TO THE DEGREE THAT ISRAEL CAN BELIEVE HIS OFT-REPEATED DESIRE FOR PEACE. WHATEVER THE CASE, THESE ARE WORDS THAT CANNOT BE IGNORED." EVEN IF IT IS, AND IS WIDELY SEEN TO BE, PARTLY A PUBLIC RELATIONS CONTEST, A DIALOGUE OF THE KIND BEGIN AND SADAT ARE NOW IN DOES HAVE SOME REAL EFFECT HERE ON HABITUAL ATTITUDES OF DISTRUST.

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TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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EXDIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT STATE 275453 SENT ACTION USCINCEUR NOV 17.
QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 275453

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LEWIS UNQUOTE VANCE
UNQUOTE HABIB

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Sent Date: 17-Nov-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
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TAGS: OVIP, PDEV, EG, IS, XF, (SADAT, ANWAR), (BEGIN, MENACHEM)
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